This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-5 (Withdrawn).

Claim 6 (Original): An extruder head for extrusion blow-molding plastic containers, comprising:

A ring gap nozzle having a mandrel (1) and a ring-shaped nozzle body (2);

An elastically deformable sleeve (3); and

Setting devices for radially deforming the elastic sleeve (3);

whereby the sleeve (3) arranged at the end on the nozzle outlet side defines an annular gap whose width is variable by axial setting movements of the mandrel (1) and/or nozzle body (2), and whose geometry can be influenced by deforming the sleeve (3) while a hose-like preformed blank is being extruded; and whereby the sleeve (3) is radially movably guided on sliding surfaces (7, 8) supporting the sleeve (3) in the upward and downward directions; characterized in that

the sleeve (3) arranged in the body of the nozzle has a conical widening toward the end on the nozzle outlet side and that the inside diameter (d_1) of the sleeve (3) measured on the upper face is smaller than the inside diameter (d_2) of the sleeve (3) on the nozzle outlet; and that

the wall profile of the sleeve (3) and the height of the points of force application of the setting devices (4) along the sleeve (3), said points of force application being located out of center in the longitudinal direction of the sleeve (3), are coordinated with one another in such a way that the upper face of the sleeve (3) guided on a sliding surface (7) of the nozzle body (2) at least approximately maintains its plane parallelism in relation to the sliding surface when the sleeve (3) is deformed.

Claim 7 (Original): An extruder head for extrusion blow-molding plastic containers, comprising

a ring gap nozzle having a mandrel (1) and a ring-shaped nozzle body(2);

an elastically deformable sleeve (3); and

setting devices (4) for radially deforming the elastic sleeve (3);

whereby the sleeve (3) arranged at the end of the nozzle outlet side defines a nozzle gap whose width is variable by axial setting movements of the mandrel (1) and/or nozzle body (2), and whose geometry can be influenced by deforming the sleeve (3) as a hose-shaped preformed blank is being extruded; and whereby the sleeve (3) is radially movably guided on sliding surfaces (7, 8) supporting the sleeve (3) in the upward and downward directions; characterized in that

the sleeve (3) arranged in the body of the nozzle has a conical widening toward the end on the nozzle outlet side, and that the inside diameter (d_1) of the sleeve (3) measured on the upper face is smaller than the inside diameter (d_2) of the sleeve on the nozzle outlet;

the points of force application of the setting devices (4) are fixed at half of the height of the sleeve (3); and that

the sleeve (3) is provided with a collar (3) at least on one end, such collar being realized in such a way that the upper face of the sleeve (3) guided on a sliding surface (7) of the nozzle body (2) at least approximately maintains its plane parallelism in relation to the sliding surface when the sleeve (3) is deformed.

Claim 8 (Previously Amended): The extruder head according to claim 6, characterized in that the inlet zone of the sleeve (3) is realized in the form of a cylinder or tube with a longitudinal profile adapted to the shape of the cylinder.

Claim 9 (Previously Amended): The extruder head according to claim 6, characterized in that the sleeve (3) has conical widenings at both ends, whereby the conical widening at the nozzle outlet is larger than the widening at the upper end on the inlet side.

Claim 10 (Original): The extruder head according to claim 9, characterized in that the sleeve (3) has a cylindrical center section (5) located between the conical widenings (6, 6).

Claims 11-12 (Withdrawn).

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The extruder head according to claim ~~1~~ 6, characterized in that the diameter (d_1, D_1) of the sleeve (3) at the upper end on the inlet side is coordinated with the inside diameter (d_2, D_2) of the sleeve (3) at the nozzle outlet in dependence on the pressure profile adjusting in the melt channel in the direction of flow in such a way that the axial force caused by the pressure of the melt to act downwardly on the sleeve (3) in the inlet zone can be largely compensated; however, at least by 50% by a lower pressure of the melt

prevailing at the nozzle outlet, said pressure exerting an upwardly directed force on the sleeve (3).

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The extruder head according to claim ~~1~~ 6, characterized in that the points of force application of the setting devices (4) are arranged in a cross-sectional plane, said plane being fixed in such a way that with maximum deformation of the sleeve, distortions of 60 µm at the most occur on the upper face of the sleeve (3) in the axial direction.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The extruder head according to claim ~~1~~ 6, characterized in that the sleeve (3) has at least one outside collar, said collar being realized in such a way that the moment of area deviation determined for the wall profile of the sleeve comes to approximately zero in the center of gravity of the area, and that the points of force application of the setting devices (4) are arranged in a cross-sectional plane in which the center of gravity of the area of the wall profile is disposed viewed in the longitudinal section.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The extruder head according to claim ~~1~~ 6, characterized in that with a wall profile of the sleeve (3) whose moment of area deviation determined in the center of gravity of the area substantially deviates from zero, the point of force application of the setting devices are

arranged offset versus the cross-sectional plane in which the center of gravity of the area of the wall profile is disposed viewed in the longitudinal section, for the purpose of compensating moment of area deviation.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn).

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The extruder head according to claim ~~1~~ 6, characterized in that the sleeve (3) radially movably abuts sliding surfaces (7, 8) of the nozzle body (2) with its upper and lower faces.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The extruder head according to claim ~~1~~ 6, characterized in that the sleeve (3) is arranged without lower support on the face side on the outlet of the ring gap nozzle and has a supporting surface for the radially movable support, said supporting surface being arranged on the periphery of the sleeve (3) with a spacing from the lower end of the sleeve.

Claim 20 (Original): The extruder head according to claim 19, characterized in that the sleeve (3) has a collar (9) at its upper end, said collar being radially movably held between sliding surfaces (7, 8).

Claim 21 (Original): The extruder head according to claim 19, characterized in that the sleeve (3) has a support collar (11) below the cross-sectional plane in which the setting devices are applied, said support collar radially movably resting on a holding ring (10); and that a thin-walled apron (12) limiting the melt channel is molded on below the support collar (11).

Claim 22 (Original): The extruder head according to claim 19, characterized in that the sleeve (3) cams (13) on the peripheral side, said cams radially movably resting on a holding ring (10) and being coupled to the setting devices (4).

Claim 23 (Original): The extruder head according to claim 22, characterized in that the sleeve (3) has an undercut below the cams (13), said undercut forming an annular support surface adjoining the underside of the cams (13) without a step.

Claims 24-26 (Withdrawn).